

House Great Lakes and Environment Committee

My name is Robert Hoffmeyer. I live in Clarkston, and am a member of the Citizens Committee for Michigan State Parks. I am the vice president of the Highland Field Trial Grounds Association, and have been active in dog field events for many years.

In 2008, the Michigan field trial clubs held **127** events over **262** days, with **5,500** handlers running **6,900** dogs. Our field events are all held on state park, state forest, or state recreation area land. These grounds are all multi-use areas. Even though the dog clubs have leased the grounds, they are shared with hunters, hikers, bikers, birders, snowmobilers, mushroom pickers and equestrians. Many of these areas are accessed very early in the morning or late at night when no staff is on duty, so revenue is lost.

Last year members of the various dog clubs volunteered over **1500** hours, working hand in hand with the DNR Stewardship Unit in an effort to help restore the grounds to a landscape dominated by grasslands with scattered trees, fence rows, and other dog objectives. Over the past twelve years the **HFTGA** has also donated over **\$90,000**, the DNR Stewardship Unit has added over **\$97,000**, and Wildlife grants have contributed over **\$47,000** to aid in the restoration of the Highland Field Trial Grounds.

I am in total support of the bills before the your committee, because they will provide the stable long term funding that is needed to help maintain our great natural resources. These natural areas provide recreation, relaxation and a destination for our residents and for the tourists, that are such a vital part of Michigan's economy.

The "recreation passport" is one of the best values in our state.

- It will eliminate the Motor Vehicle Permit
- It will provide stable long term funding for state park operations and infrastructure.
- It will provide financial aid to the state forests, pathways, boat launches, and local parks.
- It will provide funds to help preserve state historical structures.
- It will help reduce long lines at entrances to many of the state parks.
- It will free up park personnel to perform other duties throughout the park.
- These restricted funds can only be used for their dedicated purpose.
- Residents may opt out of paying for the "recreation passport" if they aren't going to use the state parks, state forests, trails, or boat launches.

I hope the legislature can get their collective arms around these bills and move them forward to a positive conclusion, so our children may enjoy Michigan's great natural resources as we have. Thank you,

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